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PCB'S PoK CT TROPHY TOUR: BCCI PROTESTS, ICC PUTS IT ON HOLD

ICC on Friday put on hold Champions Trophy tour of disputed Pakistan Occupied Kashmir (PoK) following BCCI's strong objection

BCCI TAKES UP ISSUE WITH INTERNATIONAL BODY

PCB had tweeted that they would take the trophy to PoK. "Get ready, Pakistan! The ICC Champions Trophy 2025 trophy tour kicks off in Islamabad on 16 November, also visiting scenic travel destinations like Skardu, Murree, Hunza and Muzaffarabad," it tweeted. BCCI secretary Jay Shah reportedly protested with the ICC quite strongly

'DISCUSSIONS ON' OVER TROPHY TOUR

- The tournament, last held in 2017, is already in a limbo after BCCI refused to send its team to Pakistan for the tournament
- PCB announced the tour without prior knowledge of all stakeholders
- PCB is saying that discussion between the PCB and the ICC are going on the Trophy tour | P15

1996

LAST GLOBAL MEN'S EVENT IN PAK WAS WHEN THEY CO-HOSTED WORLD CUP

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The name is Bond... for top RNG award

Lifetime achievement award goes to Ruskin Bond, Non-fiction award to Neerja Chowdhury, Fiction award to Aishwarya Jha

Ramnath Goenka Sahithya Samman awardees Ruskin Bond (represented by granddaughter Srishti), who was conferred the Lifetime Achievement Award (4th from L), Non-fiction award winner Neerja Chowdhury (6th from L) and Fiction award winner Aishwarya Jha (3rd from L) with (from L) TNIE CEO Lakshmi Menon, TNIE CMD Manoj Kumar Sonthalia, Chinmaya Mission global head Swami Swaroopanandaji, TNIE Editorial Director Prabhu Chawla, and TNIE Editor Santwana Bhattacharya, in New Delhi on Friday | SHEKHAR YADAV

PRACHI SATRAWAL @ New Delhi

"WORDS steer the mind and heart, revealing the truth that uplifts and transforms," said Swami Swaroopanandaji, Global Head, Chinmaya Mission, as he inaugurated the Ramnath Goenka Sahithya Samman 2024 at Bharat Mandapam on Friday. An evening dedicated to celebrating the enduring power of storytelling, the awards brought together luminaries from India's literary and journalistic circles to honour exceptional voices in fiction, non-fiction, and lifetime achievement.

The Sahithya Samman, instituted in memory of Ramnath Goenka, the visionary founder of *The New Indian Express* group, pays tribute to the transformative force of literature. Speaking at the event, Chairman and Managing Director Manoj Sonthalia described the awards as "a powerful testimony to the resilience, complexity, and beauty of the human experience." He added, "Today, we honour authors whose works have risen above the ordinary to touch the extraordinary."

Elaborating on the significance of the awards, Editor Santwana Bhattacharya said: "An entity so utterly mundane, familiar, and yet also a stranger—this is what the word is. It was iconised by our founder Ramnath Goenka. Imagine a blank editorial, a silence that echoes through the ages; such awareness would not be out of place in a poet. It is fitting, therefore, to have a literary award instituted in his honour."

One of the highlights was the Lifetime Achievement Award to celebrated author Ruskin Bond, represented by his granddaughter Srishti Bond. In a heartfelt video message, the 90-year-old author expressed his gratitude: "This is a happy moment for me... I only wish I could be with you. I am sending my beloved granddaughter Srishti to receive it."

The Non-fiction award went to veteran journalist Neerja Chowdhury for *How Prime Ministers Decide*, a meticulous exploration of pivotal decisions by six Indian Prime Ministers. "To receive a literary award in Ramnath Goenka's name is an honour," she said. Jury chair, author and former diplomat Pavan Varma shed light on the rigorous selection process: "Each work presented a unique lens on India. The sheer depth of research and narrative scope in Neerja Chowdhury's book set a new benchmark for contemporary non-fiction."

In the Fiction category, debut author Aishwarya Jha received the award for *The Scent of Fallen Stars*, a poignant tale of love and longing. Quoting V S Naipaul in her acceptance speech, Jha said, "Fiction reveals... I feel honoured to receive this award that celebrates India's diversity and beauty." P9

JOURNOS MUST BE DARING, SAYS CHINMAYA MISSION HEAD

MUKESH RANJAN @ New Delhi

HAILING the doyen of the Indian media, Ramnath Goenka, as a "great independent thinker", Swami Swaroopanandaji, the global head of Chinmaya Mission, on Friday said responsible journalists have to be daring and courageous and should write facts without prejudice to convey the truth.

The Swami was the chief guest at the 2nd edition of the Ramnath Goenka Sahithya Samman ceremony in Delhi. Swaroopanandaji in his address said writers "are those who protect and spread the knowledge to the world".

Reminding people about the timeless impact of epics like Ramayana and Mahabharata on the lives of the people, Swaroopanandaji dwelt on the role of Sanjaya, advisor of the blind King Dhritarashtra in the Mahabharata. "Sanjaya narrated the developments in the Kurukshetra war as it unfolded to his blind king without prejudice and with a lot of clarity," he said.

> Responsible journalism should be courageous, fearless and independent. The well-being of society should be at the core of responsible journalism
>
> Swami Swaroopanandaji

The spiritual leader cautioned that when fact and truth are muddled and falsehood is spread as fact, the situation becomes very harmful for the society.

Noting that he did not see any difference in the various forms of writing – fiction, non-fiction or media reporting, he said, "In either form, if a writer is able to bring out the better self of people to think independently, the work should be considered a great success."

Talking about the difference between fact and truth, he said, "When fact is told without prejudice it becomes truth." Authors of books, he added, "should lead us with their writings to allow us to live in unity and harmony. Such writings benefit the society forever."

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Massive fire in UP hospital, 10 newborns dead

NAMITA BAJPAI @ Lucknow

TEN newborn babies died of burn injuries and suffocation after a massive fire broke out at the neo-natal intensive care unit (NICU) of Rani Laxmi Bai Medical College in Jhansi, Uttar Pradesh late on Friday night.

Jhansi Range DIG Kalanidhi Naithani said the ward had 54 children in all and 44 were rescued after the accident, which occurred around 10.45 pm.

Jhansi District Magistrate Avinash Kumar said a short circuit in the NICU was believed to have caused the fire. "A committee has been formed under Jhansi Divisional Commissioner to probe the incident. It will submit a report to the CM," he added.

The fire led to a stampede-like situation with people trying to flee. Doctors and medical staff were seen evacuating patients by breaking the windows of the ward filled with smoke and doors blocked by flames. Panic and screams of parents of victims gripped the medical college where the incident occurred. Parents were seen pleading with authorities to save the lives of their children.

The fire brigade rushed to the site soon after the incident and the district administration also called in the Army to help out. The bodies of 10 newborn babies were recovered.

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath expressed his condolences to the families of the victims. He also wished for the speedy recovery of the injured. The CM directed officials and doctors to reach the spot immediately for relief work. Yogi has sought a report on the incident from Jhansi divisional commissioner and DIG within 12 hours.

Finance talks on at a snail's pace

S V KRISHNA CHAITANYA
EXPRESS IN BAKU

THE climate finance talks at COP29 are going on at a snail's pace with no significant headway although five days have passed. Yalchin Rafiyev, COP29 lead negotiator, on Friday called upon the parties to use the precious time wisely. "...talk to each other and take ownership of building bridging solutions. We must be honest. We believe that the pace of their work is currently too slow. We cannot afford to leave too much work to be covered later in the summit at the political level."

COP29

At a high-level ministerial, India on behalf of the Like-Minded Developing Countries (LMDCs) made a statement reiterating its demand from the developed countries for $1.3 trillion annually until 2030. "We are at a crucial juncture in our fight against climate change. What we decide here will enable all of us, particularly those in the Global South, to not only take ambitious mitigation action but also adapt to climate change. This COP is historic in this context," lead negotiator Naresh Pal Gangwar said. CONTINUED ON: P12

Row over PM's plane snag as Rahul's chopper delayed

MUKESH RANJAN @ Ranchi

THE special IAF aircraft carrying Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday developed a snag, stranding him in Jharkhand's Deoghar airport for over two hours till a replacement plane came from Delhi. The incident caused a ripple effect with Congress leader Rahul's Gandhi's helicopter being denied permission to take off from Godda, due to the airspace restrictions in the region for the PM's visit.

Officials said Modi waited inside the grounded IAF aircraft for 2 hours and 15 minutes till the alternative plane arrived.

Modi was supposed to return to Delhi after addressing a poll rally in Bihar's Jamui, around 80 km from Deoghar. As a precautionary measure, the region's airspace was declared a no-fly zone.

Around this time, Rahul was caught in a similar situation with his helicopter being grounded for two hours, prompting protests from the Congress.

The Congress and JMM wrote to the Election Commission demanding a level-playing field for all parties, saying the PM's poll campaign can't take precedence over others'.

TENSION IN CHINTAMANI VILLAGE AS GROUPS SQUABBLE OVER LAND

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Chikkaballapur

TENSION prevails at Thimmasandra village in Chintamani taluk after an argument broke out between a Dalit family and members of the local Jamia Masjid over a piece of land on Thursday.

While the Dalit family members claimed that the land belongs to them and that it has been under their possession for several years, the representatives of the masjid argued that it is owned by the masjid.

Police rushed to the village and brought the situation under control. Though the incident took place on Thursday, it came to light on Friday.

Police pacify two groups at Thimmasandra village on Thursday

According to police sources, the dispute over the land has been pending before a local court since 2016.

Meanwhile, in a post on social media, BJP state president BY Vijendra stated that the Waqf issue has become a cause for concern for farmers. The Congress government has instructed revenue officials to take away farmers' land that have been mentioned as Waqf property, he alleged.

Vijendra said that if revenue officials continue to trouble the farmers, BJP workers will launch an agitation against the Congress government.

According to police sources, on a complaint from the representatives of the masjid, a case has been registered against some unknown persons. However, no one has been arrested so far.

EXPRESS READ

BBMP to launch portal to provide fresh khatas

Bengaluru: The BBMP is set to bring 5 lakh properties, which don't have khatas, under the BBMP's tax ambit by issuing khatas. The Palike will launch a portal soon, enabling property owners who don't have any type of khata, to obtain new e-khata, said a top BBMP official | P2

HDK seeks SIT probe into poaching charge

Mysuru: Union Minister HD Kumaraswamy demanded that the government order a SIT probe into Chief Minister Siddaramaiah's charges that the BJP attempted to poach 50 Congress MLAs with an offer of Rs 50 crore each to pull down the government | P4

MODERNISATION PLAN

Eye in the sky: K'taka police set to get 100 drones

BALA CHAUHAN @ Bengaluru

IN a first, Karnataka police are set to acquire drones to help improve public safety and service delivery, among other things.

"The police department is in the process of inviting tenders for 80-100 indigenous drones as part of its modernisation plan at an estimated cost of Rs 4 crore," S Murugan, Additional Director-General of Police, Communication, Logistics and Modernisation (CLM), told *The New Indian Express*.

He heads a technical committee to look into the specifics of drones that can be utilised by the police in various functions – from improving public safety, search and rescue operations, security surveillance on illegal, anti-national activities, movements, contraband crops to crisis management, law and order, crowd control, VIP movement, timely delivery of medicines, including anti-venom, quick access to accident sites and emergencies in difficult terrains, etc.

The use of drones is not new in law enforcement operations, but this is the first time the state police are procuring unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) in bulk for efficient policing and service delivery.

The Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) has authorised the Centre for Counter Terrorism (CCT) of the Internal Security Division (ISD), a specialised wing of Karnataka Police, to train police personnel to use drones.

Drones are force multipliers and have given an edge to law enforcement operations across the world.

Suo motu case against KSE for inflammatory remarks

MARX TEJASWI @ Shivamogga

SHIVAMOGGA Police have registered a suo motu case against former deputy chief minister and Rashtra Bhaktara Balaga convenor KS Eshwarappa for allegedly accusing Congress of promoting "Islamisation" and warning that riots will erupt and leaders of that party will be "hunted down and killed".

According to a complaint registered at Jayanagar police station, while addressing a press conference in the city on November 13, Eshwarappa alleged that the number of Waqf cases is increasing and despite the "misconduct" of Muslims, the Congress government "remains silent".

"Agricultural lands, temples, mutts, schools and colleges, and even properties under the archaeology department have been converted as Waqf assets. They haven't even spared the village where Sir M Visvesvaraya was born," Eshwarappa stated, according to the complaint. P4